

Message Text

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AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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TAGS: OEXC, UR

SUBJECT: EXCHANGES: CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS: REMAINING PAG'S FOR
1975

REF: STATE 274191

DEPT FOR CU/ARTS

GENEVA FOR GORIDEN

LENINGRAD FOR P&C

1. REFTTEL STATES DEPARTMENT "HAS SELECTED CREATIVE SOURCE"
SINGING GROUP FOR APRIL TOUR OF USSR. THIS GIVES US PROBLEMS ON
TWO COUNTS.
2. FIRST, WE BELIEVE PRACTICE FOLLOWED IN PAST OF CONSULTING
EMBASSY WELL IN ADVANCE OF SELECTION HAS PROVEN ITS VALUE,
ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO KNOWLEDGE OF LOCAL SCENE AND LOCAL
INTERESTS, AND SHOULD NOT NOW BE ABANDONED.
3. SECOND, FROM INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE, NEITHER "CREATIVE
SOURCE" NOR ITS GENRE REPRESENT THE BEST IN SIGNIFICANT POP STYLES
PREVALENT IN AMERICA TODAY. IF GROUP NOT AT TOP OF MOST INTERESTING
TRENDS IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC, BELIEVE CONSIDERABLE FUNDS INVOLVED
SHOULD BE SPENT ON OTHER PROGRAMS. WE UNDERSTAND GROUP LARGELY
IMITATES OTHER ARTISTS AND HAVE NOT HAD ONE HIT RECORD. UNDER-
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STAND ALSO THAT PART OF THEIR REPERTORY IS SO-CALLED "SCREAMING"

SOUL, WHICH PROVED UNPALATABLE TO SOVIET AUDIENCES AT BEGINNING OF LAST SPRING'S ODETTA TOUR AND WAS SUBSEQUENTLY DROPPED IN FAVOR OF MORE TRADITIONAL FOLK MUSIC.

4. RECENT INDICATIONS, INCLUDING SIGNAL SUCCESS JOFFREY'S ROCK BALLET "TRINITY" WHICH APPROVED BY GOLOVKINA AND COMMENTS BY CULTURAL AND MEDIA OFFICIALS, ARE THAT SOFTER VERSIONS OF ROCK AND OTHER CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC MAY BE ACCEPTABLE HERE AND OF COURSE WOULD MEET EAGER AUDIENCE RESPONSE. SUGGEST CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDE: JACKSON FIVE (BALLADS, VARIETY OF STYLE); DAVID CASSIDY AND THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY; CHICAGO (EXTREMELY POPULAR IN USSR); BLOOD, SWEAT AND TEARS; TSOP--THE SOUND OF PHILADELPHIA; NEIL DIMAMOND; DON MCLEAN; CARLY SIMON; JOHN DENVER; THE FIRST CHOICE. SEVERAL OF THESE GROUPS ALREADY HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN USSR TOUR AND MAY BE AGREEABLE TO COME A LOW COST FOR THE EXPERIENCE AND PUBLICITY.

5. ALTERNATE SUGGESTION WITH MUCH TO RECOMMEND IN TERMS OF TIMING AND SUBSTANCE IS JAZZ GROUP TO MARK 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF LOUIS ARMSTRONG'S BIRTH, BEFORE AND/OR AFTER DATE OF JULY 4TH. (WILLIS CONOVER MIGHT ACCOMPANY AS HONORARY AMBASSADOR OF JAZZ.) WIDE PROGRAMMING POSSIBLE DUE TO UNTOUCHABLE ARMSTRONG STATUS HERE. POST SUGGEST EITHER NEW YORK JAZZ REPERTORY COMPANY, WHICH HAS SPECIAL ARMSTRONG PROGRAM (SEE NYTIMES OCT. 10), OR OTHER GROUP THROUGH PROMOTER GEORGE WEIN.

6. THE EMBASSY WOULD THEREFORE PREFER TO SEE A GROUP SUCH AS THOSE NAMED ABOVE TOUR THE USSR. PROPOSED SCHEDULE SHIFT FOR ST. PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA (SEE SEPTTEL) SUGGESTS MAY OR JUNE 1975 AS GOOD TIMING.

7. SUGGEST DEPT. CONSULT VOA RUSSIAN SERVICE FOR ADVICE ON SOVIET INTERESTS IN AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC AND JAZZ, SUBJECT THEY KNOW WELL THROUGH LISTENER MAIL, CONVERSATIONS WITH SOVIETS. THEY ALSO IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH AMERICAN POP GROUPS, BEST OF WHICH FREQUENTLY ARE INTERVIEWED FOR SOVIET AUDIENCES.
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